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Contact: 97 - 81
Jay Ziegler
Kirsten Powers
Christine Wilkas
(202) 395-3230

**FORMAL NEGOTIATIONS ON RENEWAL OF THE
NTT ARRANGEMENT TO BEGIN ON SEPTEMBER 9**

The United States and Japan reached agreement today to formally begin negotiations to extend the NTT telecommunications procurement arrangement beyond its September 30 expiration date. Both sides also agreed today to discuss improvements to the current NTT arrangement when the formal talks begin on September 9 in Tokyo.

"I am pleased that the United States and Japan have confirmed their mutual intention to reach a final agreement by September 30 so as to ensure no lapse in coverage of NTT telecommunications procurements," said U.S. Trade Representative Charlene Barshefsky. "This agreement has been instrumental in ensuring that U.S. telecommunications suppliers, among the most competitive in the world, have a fair shot to compete for the sizeable and important procurement contracts offered by NTT."

In addition to issues relating to the NTT arrangement, Japan agreed today to address limitations on foreign investment in NTT and KDD under the Enhanced Initiative on Deregulation and Competition Policy.

As a result of this agreement, USTR, the Department of State and the Department of Commerce have decided to withdraw their request that the Federal Communications Commission delay action on certain applications pending from Japanese telecommunications providers.